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**HEALTH & WELFARE**

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**NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 13, 2004

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**Food Safety Rule Hearings Begin Next Week**

Hearings on draft rules for all regulated food establishments will be held throughout the state over the next two weeks. The draft rules cover a variety of food safety and sanitation topics, including food safety training of employees and safe temperatures for food.

The updated draft rules specify that one employee trained in food safety must be working at all regulated food establishments during business hours. Current rules state that a food establishment must have a trained person on staff, but not necessarily on shift, during operating hours. Along with changes in training, the draft rules specify lower food temperatures for refrigeration, and also reduced hot holding temperatures for food that is being served.

“The draft rules support the most recent scientific data and national trends to protect public food safety at restaurants and grocery stores,” says Patrick Guzzle, Food Protection Program manager for the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. “The rules help improve food quality and safety, and keep us current with our neighboring states for food safety practices.”

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare updated the food safety and sanitation rules through the help and input of a variety of stakeholders, including food and lodging businesses, independent restaurant owners, retailers, educators, regulatory agencies, and other interested parties.

**(more)**

Business owners and the general public who are interested or who have comments are encouraged to read the proposed rules and attend the public meetings. The hearings will be held from 7-9 p.m. at each location.

**August 17, 2004: Boise, Holiday Inn, 3300 S. Vista, Silverhorn Room**

**August 18, 2004: Coeur D'Alene, Shilo Inn, 702 W. Appleway, Coeur D'Alene Room**

**August 24, 2004: Pocatello, Holiday Inn, 1399 Bench, Madeira Room**

People can read and print an informational copy of these rules by accessing them on-line at: <http://www2.state.id.us/dhw> and clicking on the link for "Proposed Food Safety Rules for Restaurants/Markets."

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**(Editors: For more information please contact Patrick Guzzle, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Food Protection Program manager, at 334-5938)**